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GENERAL ASSEMBLY

PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE TWENTY-FOURTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Monday, 8 October 1990, at 10 a.m.

President:	Mr. de MARCO	(Malta)
later:	Mr. FLEMMING (Vice-President)	(Saint Lucia)
Later:	Mr. de MARCO	(Malta)

- General debate [9] (continued)

Statement made by

Mr. Noel (Grenada)

Address by Mr. James Fitz-Allen Mitchell, Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Finance and Planning of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

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Statements made by

Mr. Insanally (Guyana)
Mr. Da Luz (Cape Verde)
Mr. Rana (Nepal)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 9 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE

Mr. NOEL (Grenada): My Government views this forty-fifth session of the General Assembly as one which is of particular importance to the international community, especially as it has been convened at a time when the basic principles of the Charter of the United Nations need to be reaffirmed, upheld and defended by Member States. This session is also taking place amidst increasing concerns on the part of small States over specific events and policies which are not conducive to the progressive development of our countries. During the latter part of 1989 and early 1990 the international community had great expectations of a peaceful decade ahead. We were optimistic that we should be able to begin seriously to address the difficult issues of underdevelopment and economic inequities, thus creating the basis for a durable peace, respect for the rights of the individual, justice and democracy. Recent events, however, constitute a set-back to peace and progress as we await the fuller articulation of the Middle East crisis.

It is in this uncertain and challenging environment that my delegation wishes to extend congratulations to you, Sir, on your election as President of the General Assembly at this forty-fifth session and to express our confidence that you will guide the work of this session to positive results. My delegation wishes to express its profound thanks and highest commendations to Mr. Garba for his exemplary conduct of the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly. My delegation is also pleased to pay a tribute to the Secretary-General, Mr. Perez de Cuellar, for his tireless efforts for peace throughout the world.

I bring to the forty-fifth session warm greetings from the newly elected Government of Grenada. The elections were the second since the sad events which befell our country during October 1983. Today the people of Grenada are able to exercise their democratic rights in a free society.

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My Goverment has instituted mechanisms for effective consultation with our people on key issues of national concern. At present, we are actively preparing for the re-introduction of local government to enable our citizens to participate in the management of their own affairs. These political institutions, rooted in respect for the rights of the individual and the rule of law, are zealously guarded by our Government and people. On the economic front, my Government has carefully prioritized its major macro-economic goals so as to create the conditions for sustained growth and balanced development. Sadly, however, public finances continue to be hard-pressed and, in April of this year, suffered a serious blow with the unfortunate occurrence of a massive fire which destroyed our nation's financial complex. The damage amounted to several million dollars and has further set back our recovery. It has also weakened our ability to properly service our debts and our membership contributions to certain international organizations.

However, I wish to give the assurance that my Government is committed to observing the principles enshrined in the Charter and is prepared to conduct its international relations on the basis of this commitment and in accordance with the stated norms and standards of international law.

Happily, this session is not required to address the question of the independence of Namibia. The people of Namibia have at last chosen their leaders. Grenada notes with satisfaction the crucial role played by the United Nations in helping to bring about independence for Namibia. My delegation wishes to especially welcome Namibia as a full Member of the United Nations and to extend warmest greetings to its delegation.

I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome Liechtenstein to the family of nations and to convey our best wishes to its delegation.

It cannot be denied that the peculiar circumstances of small States tend, unfortunately, to produce opportunities for the execution of unlawful schemes by

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radical groups, and even for acts of aggression by States, in total disregard of the inalienable rights of peoples to determine their own destinies in freedom and by peaceful means. Quite recently, the Caribbean region was again assaulted by an attempt to overthrow the constitutionally elected Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago - an act which was strongly condemned by my Government.

The failure of this attempt strengthens and reinforces the democratic process of choosing leadership by constitutional means. But this development does not only serve to underscore the patent vulnerability of small States and to demonstrate that threats to peace and security can emerge from any quarter, but also provides opportunities for developed States to show greater sensitivity to the conditions affecting small States. Furthermore, such incidents highlight the relevance of mechanisms of collective action as envisaged by the Charter of the United Nations, especially as it relates to the legitimate security concerns and political survival of these States.

The Government of Grenada is anxious to receive concrete assurances that less-developed disadvantaged States, in general, and small island developing countries, in particular, will not be the net losers in current attempts aimed at buttressing political change in Eastern Europe by directing massive financial and economic assistance to those countries.

While we welcome political changes in Eastern Europe, my Government will continue to appeal for higher and more diversified levels of assistance for countries such as ours and for a significant relaxation of disabling conditionalities regularly imposed by international financial institutions. Such developments, we contend, will help to avoid economic, social and political instability with their attendant consequences.

The amelioration of conditions of poverty and the gradual development of our

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societies will not be realized if, in the process, we experience environmental dis-benefits. A real threat to human life exists today, expressed in terms of the phenomenon of global warming, pollution, the destruction of vital ecosystems and the dumping of toxic waste and other hazardous substances. These negative side effects of technological advancement and industrial development can deal significant blows particularly to smaller countries whose fragile economies can hardly provide resources for the effective management, control and combating of those conditions. My Government fully supports the development of mechanisms designed to address the problems associated with environmental hazards and calls for the commitment of adequate financial and other resources for this purpose. Accordingly, Grenada looks forward to the United Nations-sponsored Conference on the Environment and Development scheduled for 1992 in Brazil.

Hardly a country among us has been spared the scourge of illegal drugs. The destruction of the social fabric of modern societies has been accompanied by the gradual erosion of the political authority of many States, as the narco-traffickers intensify their death-bearing actions.

Success in the fight against drugs in a small island State will depend on the co-ordination of policies, on the regional and international levels, aimed at reducing the production of, the demand for, and traffic in illegal drugs and substances. The resources required for effective action on this front are clearly not available to small States, which are particularly vulnerable as transit-points for the drug trade. Accordingly, within the context of the international anti-drug campaign, my Government anticipates greater levels of international collaboration and co-operation in addressing problems of drug production, trafficking, addiction, interdiction and rehabilitation.

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The beginning of the decade has brought with it momentous changes in the world political landscape, notably in Eastern Europe and Latin America where millions of people have been able to freely elect governments of their choice. We have witnessed a relaxation of tension and a retreat from cold-war conditions between the super-Powers. Important steps towards nuclear disarmament have also been taken. My Government welcomes these positive developments. However, we are cognizant of the existence of other sources of tension which require urgent attention and settlement.

The ink had hardly dried on the Iraq-Iran truce; we had not completed paying a tribute to the valiant work of the illustrious Secretary-General and his special envoys who had mediated that settlement, when a new threat to peace and stability in the Middle East, and the world at large, emerged.

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(Mr. Noel, Grenada)

Grenada condemns the aggressive action of the Iraqi régime in invading and annexing the territory of Kuwait, and urges the immediate and peaceful withdrawal of its troops. My Government fully supports Security Council resolutions 660 (1990) and 661 (1990), and calls upon Iraq to adhere to the principles of international relationships as inscribed in the United Nations Charter. It is my country's fervent hope that this crisis will be settled peacefully.

In July 1988, my Party, which now forms the Government of Grenada, was instrumental in forwarding the signatures of 12,000 Grenadians petitioning for the release of freedom fighter Nelson Mandela. This petition, of which we are justly proud, added the Grenadian voices to the millions of others around the world calling for justice on his behalf.

My Government applauds the release of Nelson Mandela, and notes with interest the minor adjustments to the infrastructure of apartheid. However, to the extent that the goal of majority rule remains unattained in South Africa, Grenada urges the intensification of economic sanctions against the Pretoria régime so as to cause the rapid demise of the apartheid system and to secure respect for human equality, dignity and freedom.

My delegation is hopeful that significant progress will be achieved in ongoing talks concerning Cambodia so that peace can return to the people of that suffering country.

We are also extremely anxious for a negotiated settlement of the Korean question in accordance with the preferences of the Korean people and through mechanisms which they believe can facilitate the goal of Korean reunification. The historical circumstances and political considerations which inspired the exclusion of these sovereign States from the United Nations have abated sufficiently to allow the Korean people a voice in this august body, a right which they are fully

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competent to exercise. Notwithstanding the fact that reunification has thus far proven to be elusive, my Government conceives of no justifiable basis for the continued denial of full membership in the United Nations of the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, if the latter so wishes.

In the Caribbean region, my Government fully supports efforts to assist Haiti in developing political and institutional arrangements that would allow the people of that country to choose a Government, uncoerced by the threat or use of force, and lay the basis for sustained democratic practices. My Government takes this opportunity also to reaffirm its commitment to the regional integration process, which is so essential to the survival and development of the Caribbean region, especially in the light of the emergency of new trading and economic blocs in this region of the world.

My Government wishes to congratulate the people of Nicaragua on their bold step in favour of peace and democracy. Of course, there are tremendous challenges to be met in the process of reconstruction and consolidation, and our best wishes are extended to the Government and the people of Nicaragua. At the same time, my Government notes with concern the unsettled situation in El Salvador. Grenada supports efforts by the United Nations to mediate in peace talks between the Government of El Salvador and the FMLN. Generally, we look forward to the complete success of the peace process in Central America, and applaud those regional leaders, in particular the former President of Costa Rica and Nobel Peace Prize winner, Oscar Arias Sanchez, who have played such a critical role in the movement towards peace, stability and domocracy.

My Government wishes to commend the initiative of those world leaders whose vision and determination led to the convening of the recently concluded World Summit for Children. May I take this opportunity to inform the General Assembly

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that Grenada has taken all steps necessary for the immediate ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. It is our hope that Member States will find it possible to become parties to the Convention at the earliest opportunity. Indeed, my Government is currently engaging the nation in public discussions on draft legislation to protect the rights of children in accordance with the United Nations Convention.

Throughout the world, the co-operative movement plays a vital role in the economic and social life of many people, millions of whom participate in credit unions and producer co-operatives, thereby providing valuable resources and opportunities for mutual co-operation and self-help. My Government recognizes the importance of co-operatives and is pleased to give support to the call that 1995 should be declared International Year of Co-operatives.

In conclusion, my delegation cannot allow this occasion to go by without commenting on the favourable trends manifested in the rapprochement between East and West, especially in the developments in Europe, with the historic turning-point that has taken place in the unification of Germany. My delegation extends sincere congratulations to the people of united Germany and to the unity Government that represents them.

These developments will provide new opportunities for the creation of a free, democratic and pluralistic Europe based on peaceful co-operation. Furthermore, the increasingly close co-operation between the United States of America and the Soviet Union is seen as a positive development which will significantly strengthen the role of the United States in fulfilling its primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security, and has heightened the possibility of resolving the formidable global challenges facing the world community.

My delegation believes that this is the moment when the United Nations can

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once again play the central role for which it was envisaged at the very beginning. We believe that with the political will and the determination to pursue the noble objectives of the Charter of the Organization, we might deliberate during this session for the benefit of all countries and for mankind.

ADDRESS BY MR. JAMES FITZ-ALLEN MITCHELL, PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, FINANCE AND PLANNING OF SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES

The PRESIDENT: The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Finance and Planning of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

Mr. James Fitz-Allen Mitchell, Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Finance and Planning of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, was escorted to the rostrum.

The PRESIDENT: I have great pleasure in welcoming the Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Finance and Planning of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Mr. James Fitz-Allen Mitchell, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. MITCHELL (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines): I wish, on behalf of my country, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as President of the General Assembly. I am pleased to express our confidence in your ability to undertake the very important duties with which you have been entrusted.

I also extend our deep appreciation to His Excellency Major General Joseph N. Garba, President of the General Assembly at its forty-fourth session, for the exemplary manner in which he carried out his difficult task.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines welcomes the admission of the Principality of Leichtenstein as the 161st member of the United Nations. The entire international community takes great pride that this event which has brought us one step nearer to the achievement of the goal of universal membership.

(Mr. Mitchell, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines)

We also take this opportunity to welcome the Republic of Namibia to membership of the United Nations. We are happy and rejoice that, at last, Namibia has taken its rightful place in the body of nations as a free, sovereign and independent State.

The Government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines unequivocally supports the call for Iraq's withdrawal from the territory of Kuwait. No small, vulnerable country in the United Nations system can be expected to adopt any other stand, and we are fortunate that the United Nations exists to provide a forum for international opinion against plunder to be asserted.

I support the proposal, put forward by President Mitterand of the Republic of France, that an international conference be called to attempt to settle the outstanding issues of the Middle East. I wish to state that I consider the elegant presentation by President Mitterand to be the most lucid advice ever put forward for resolution of the Middle East crisis. We remain convinced that no settlement of the Gulf crisis, which continues to threaten the welfare of all our peoples, can be accomplished without resolving the outstanding issue of a homeland for the Palestinians. We who have represented the landless poor in our own countries know the fervour with which our own people pursue the objective of owning their own land and homes.

The General Assembly, however, should not continue to engage in the credentials controversy on Israel's right to a place in this Assembly. Now that the legitimate voice of the Palestinians has recognized Israel's right to exist, there should be no challenge to Israel's position in the United Nations or any of its agencies.

But if the United Nations is to maintain its high moral ground on the annexation of Kuwait and endorse all the Security Council resolutions on Iraqi

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aggression, then Security Council resolution 242 (1967), which condemns the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, should also be observed. The occupation of Lebanon is similarly reprehensible. We have to be logical and consistent. It is for these reasons that we support the call for an internationally negotiated settlement in the Middle East. To attempt to get around the holding of an international peace conference means that the United Nations system is being used merely as a convenience, to deal with only part of the problem.

A peaceful solution to the Gulf crisis is in the best interests of the international community. War will mean further hardship for the dispossessed in the Middle East itself; provide further cause for the religious terrorists; create untold chaos with respect to inflation in other lands; and in general aggravate social tensions everywhere.

The stalemate in the Gulf cannot be allowed to drift interminably. The sanctions must be meticulously observed, and any variation should be the responsibility of the Sanctions Committee. Let me go further and say that no group of countries should think that any conflict in their area that undermines the international economy will be left entirely to them to settle without the intervention of the international community.

In summary, our humble opinion is that, first, Iraq must withdraw unconditionally from Kuwait in accordance with Security Council resolution 660 (1990); secondly, sanctions against Iraq must continue, in accordance with Security Council resolutions 661 (1990) and 670 (1990); and, thirdly, an international peace conference on the Middle East should be called, with the objective of ensuring implementation of Security Council resolution 242 (1967).

(Mr. Mitchell, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines)

When I last spoke in this Assembly about the Disarmament Conference I very early put forward the idea that the savings resulting from disarmament should be applied to the environment. I went further and suggested that halting desertification in Africa should be the first such project. This concept has gained currency elsewhere, and I still hope that it will be considered as a principle to be generally endorsed. There is need, however, to ensure greater international co-ordination of the various initiatives being undertaken to address environmental issues. We do not, however, need new agencies. The importance of the environment has led my Government to declare the 1990s as the decade of the environment, and we have been giving this matter the priority it deserves.

In respect of using the peace dividend for environmental purposes, let me add that those who are among the poorer nations in this world have no moral authority to demand any benefits from the lessening of the East-West conflict when an inordinate percentage of their own budgets is dedicated to military expenditure.

The economic and political developments in Eastern Europe deserve the commendation of this Assembly. While the momentum of change is now firmly in the hands of the people of those countries, and similar changes are being pursued in Latin America, South East Asia and the Koreas, none of this would have happened without the brilliant leadership of President Gorbachev. I wish to pay tribute to his vision. Our Caribbean has benefited from his leadership, and we therefore wish to place our appreciation on record.

(Mr. Mitchell, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines)

It is a tragedy that what has been gained by the re-establishment of the pre-eminence of the free market economy and the lessening of East-West tensions should be so critically undermined by the illogical behaviour of Iraq. But again let me assert that the recognition by us of illogical behaviour and the refusal to recognize the weight of international response, indicates that there is essentially a basic conflict between different modes of thinking. It looks as though our Cartesian heritage in Western civilization does not equip us to deal with the extravagances of religious fundamentalism in the Middle East. A deep and perilous canyon divides our cultures. We should therefore adopt a posture of standing firm, while at the same time using every possible means of communication, by utilizing expertise which can bridge these different methodologies of thinking and so permanently resolve these issues.

My delegation reiterates the solidarity of the Government and people of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines with the people of the Republic of Haiti. It is our wish that before long the opportunity will be given to the Haitian people to exercise their sovereign right to choose and to participate freely in the determination of their own destiny without any external interference. We note, however, that while the people of Haiti must ultimately determine their own destiny and that of their country, the support of the international community is a necessary condition for the country's early progress towards democracy and development. We therefore urge the international community and relevant international organizations to increase their technical, economic and financial co-operation with Haiti in order to support its economic and social development efforts.

(Mr. Mitchell, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines)

Changes taking place in several Eastern European nations and measures aimed at encouraging such changes must contribute to world peace. There is a movement away from outmoded political and economic systems and greater emphasis is being placed on individual liberty, initiative and enterprise.

I wish to congratulate the people of Germany on the historic unification of their country. Important lessons for many of us can be drawn from the German experience, beginning with Germany's well-structured constitution and the discipline of its peoples in the workplace. The interaction of these factors has yielded the surpluses with which to bargain for freedom and has helped to offset the burden of decades of communist misdirection.

We in the Caribbean recognize the need for our political unification and I pray that the day will come when we can request this Assembly to recognize the new status that should attend our current initiatives.

On the Kampuchean problem, we support all initiatives aimed at achieving a political solution that would ensure respect for the territorial integrity of Kampuchea and the right of the Kampuchean people to self-determination. We fully support the recent United Nations peace plan agreed to by the four Cambodian factions for a comprehensive peace settlement. I have seen the desperate conditions of their refugees on the border and congratulate the United Nations on the relief efforts made on their behalf.

Coming nearer home, the delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines takes note of the recent developments in Central America and expresses the hope that the peaceful conditions which at present exist will become a permanent feature of the entire subregion. It is our hope that these favourable conditions will facilitate the early return of refugees and displaced persons to their countries of origin so that they may participate in the orderly reconstruction of the subregion.

(Mr. Mitchell, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines)

I wish to conclude by congratulating the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, on the excellent job he is doing to ensure that the objectives of the United Nations are honoured.

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Finance and Planning of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines for the statement he has just made.

The Right Honourable James Fitz-Allen Mitchell, Prime Minister of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, was escorted from the rostrum.*

Mr. INSANALLY (Guyana): There is now abroad in the world a mood of optimism which, however cautious and restrained, now anticipates the installation of a new global order of peace and development. Engendered by the remarkable changes in East-West relations and other positive developments in the international sphere, this optimism is attended by a renewed faith in the United Nations as the central forum for inter-State co-operation. At this hopeful juncture therefore the General Assembly at its forty-fifth session will be expected to analyse the prevailing world situation and to explore the building of a new and better world. We are confident that, under the able guidance of Mr. Guido de Marco of Malta, it will not fail to do so.

I therefore wish to extend to Mr. de Marco, on behalf of my delegation, our warmest congratulations and good wishes for a successful presidency. His distinguished career leaves us in no doubt as to the effective conduct of our deliberations. In saluting him I also wish to pay a tribute to his predecessor in office, Major General Joseph Garba, for the dynamic leadership he provided during the past year.

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* Mr. Flemming (Saint Lucia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Insanally, Guyana)

May I also avail myself of this opportunity to convey to the Secretary-General my Government's appreciation of the active role which he continues to play in strengthening the institutional capacity of the United Nations fully to address the concerns and aspirations of its membership.

To our newest Member State, the Principality of Liechtenstein, I extend a very warm welcome. We are also particularly pleased to recognize in our midst today the delegation of Namibia, which is participating in this regular session of the General Assembly as a sovereign State of the international community.

As we meet on this occasion, the clouds of yet another war have gathered ominously over the Gulf, casting a pall on the optimism which I noted at the outset of my statement. The Iraq-Kuwait conflict which erupted unexpectedly on the eve of this session of the Assembly now threatens to escalate to a wider confrontation.

(Mr. Insanally, Guyana)

The Security Council has already acted swiftly and decisively to restrain this jarring aggression. It has rightly condemned the acquisition of territory by force and stressed the need for the peaceful settlement of all disputes in accordance with the United Nations Charter. The matter has now engaged the attention of the Assembly. We must reaffirm the Council's stern condemnation of the use of force and call for the urgent restoration of peace.

It would be disastrous, in our view, if this intemperate aggression were to jeopardize the prospects we now have of creating a new and better system of international relations. The astonishing changes occurring around the globe - in Europe especially, but also in other regions - have revealed new political and economic horizons, which, although not clearly discernible, none the less hold the promise of growing interdependence among nations. Our expectation was - and still is - that peace and development would now be allowed to prosper throughout the world.

My own delegation believes that the changes that have occurred are by and large positive, but that their potential for good can be realized only if they are properly harnessed and oriented. In this belief we prefer to think that the Gulf crisis is but a thoughtless and temporary aberration from the current trend towards dialogue, the pacific settlement of disputes, and international co-operation. If anything, therefore, this unfortunate crisis must hasten our efforts to build a new order that could possibly eliminate such acts of aggression and allow all peoples to concentrate on their peaceful development.

The international community should thus move swiftly to defuse the Iraq-Kuwait conflict by adhering scrupulously to the blueprint of action outlined in the relevant resolutions of the Security Council. An important prerequisite is the immediate withdrawal of Iraq from Kuwait. The acquisition of territory by

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force is unequivocally condemned by the Charter of the United Nations and can in no way be justified or tolerated.

Once withdrawal has taken place, a mechanism for dialogue and negotiation could be created to deal with the underlying causes of the conflict and ultimately to find a just and acceptable solution. It may then be appropriate to consider the holding of an international peace conference charged with finding a comprehensive settlement to the problems of the Middle East, at the core of which remains the question of Palestine.

The issues involved are complex and deeply rooted. Nevertheless, with a large measure of political will, it is yet possible to reach a basis for dialogue and negotiation. The United Nations may play a helpful role in organizing such a forum in a manner which enjoys the confidence of all the parties concerned. Given the remarkable success achieved thus far by the international community in the peaceful settlement of regional disputes, we cannot easily contemplate failure in the Middle East.

For example, the long struggle for Namibia's independence was brought to a peaceful end through negotiations between the parties concerned. The United Nations was a major catalyst of this process and by its provisional transition assistance created the circumstances in which the Namibian people proceeded to freedom. That happy outcome has since given rise to expectations that the distressing situation in South Africa itself - where apartheid's fortress is still entrenched - will also be resolved by further concerted international efforts. To guarantee such success, however, we must ensure that the full pressure of sanctions is maintained in order to bring about the desired end. Elsewhere in Africa, in the Western Sahara a plan has been approved by the Security Council which offers a distinct opportunity for finally resolving that protracted dispute.

(Mr. Insanally, Guyana)

In Asia, more specifically in Afghanistan, the Geneva Agreements which were negotiated under the aegis of the United Nations appear to have paved the way for national reconciliation and reconstruction. There should now be no deviation from these accepted goals.

Similarly, the Cambodian question, which has long defied solution, is now within reach of a promising settlement. The plan devised by the Security Council in consultation with the parties involved has commanded wide acceptance and is ready to be implemented. The role required of the United Nations is highly challenging but it is one which, with the full support of the international community, it is capable of playing.

We have also witnessed in this forum the joyful reunification of the Yemeni people and of the German people. We are now seeing the positive, though tentative, steps recently taken by the two sides in the Korean question. Although it has long been agreed that the reunification of Korea should be carried out peacefully and without outside interference, its achievement has eluded us. We urge the Korean people to accelerate the process of dialogue they have begun. Furthermore, we pose the question whether an elevation of participation in this Organization might not be a positive contribution to this process.

Even in the recalcitrant region of the Middle East, we have witnessed the termination of the obdurate Iran-Iraq war. Close by, however, in the Mediterranean, the problem of Cyprus has not yet proved amenable to negotiations. Despite the best endeavours of the Secretary-General and several worthwhile initiatives, the two sides remain apart. It is to be hoped that with the continuing intervention of the Security Council a new impetus will be given to co-operation, compromise and reconciliation so that the independence and territorial integrity of Cyprus may be preserved.

(Mr. Insanally, Guyana)

Finally, here in this hemisphere the United Nations has also been instrumental in the attenuation of conflict in Central America, a region long racked by internecine strife and appalling poverty. A process of determined negotiation and patient international co-operation has at last been rewarded with prospects of a definitive and lasting peace. Through observation and verification of agreements by the States concerned the United Nations has provided conditions of stability in which peace and development may be promoted. Such has been the success of this operation that consideration is now being given to its replication elsewhere.

Indeed, this impressive record of achievement by the United Nations in the important areas of peace-making and peace-keeping to which I have briefly alluded amply demonstrates its capability, both actual and potential, for preserving international security. In the new situation that has been created by the growing rapprochement between the East and West and a corresponding willingness to accelerate the process of disarmament, it is now possible to conceive of multilateral arrangements to fill any vacuum that may be created by the disappearance of military blocs. Such arrangements would in our view provide for a system of collective security that could effectively serve to deter future threats of aggression and upon which all nations could rely for protection from attacks on their sovereignty and territorial integrity.

This idea, whose time appears to have come, is frontally addressed in the thought-provoking report submitted by the Secretary-General on the Organization's work. Evidently based on his personal experience, the suggestions include, inter alia, a strengthening of the peace-making capacity of the Security Council, an enhanced role for the Secretary-General, the enforcement of United Nations decisions, greater recourse to the International Court of Justice in cases of legal dispute, and the use of regional arrangements, wherever appropriate, to buttress United Nations machinery.

(Mr. Insanally, Guyana)

These proposals are by no means novel; they have in fact been bandied about in several attempts at strengthening the United Nations. However, the present political conjuncture, in which nation States appear more disposed to international co-operation, is especially favourable to a serious examination of the feasibility of their implementation. We urge that these proposals be revisited.

It must be realized, however, that peace and development are indivisible. Global security cannot be achieved without the establishment of a more equitable economic relationship between States and the solution of the world's pressing social problems. Therefore, while we welcome the progress that has taken place in the political field, we must nevertheless deplore the fragile economic and social conditions in which peace has to be pursued. Today, developing countries stand trapped between possible recession in major industrialized countries and the stifling constraints of their own weak economies. They continue to feel the severe strain of their increasing debt burden, despite the welcome adoption of progressive policies by some creditor countries and other financial entities. At this point, therefore, we cannot be sanguine about their economic future.

(Mr. Insanally, Guyana)

According to the recent United Nations World Economic Survey, global economic growth, which slowed in 1989, is expected to slow even further this year. An increased contraction in world trade, rising interest rates and the weakening of commodity prices will all conspire to frustrate recovery and growth in the developing countries. This dismal situation is now further worsened by the impact of spiralling energy costs that developing countries simply cannot afford. The Gulf crisis has thus taken additional hostages, namely the peoples of the third world, whose beleaguered economies have been forced even further back along the path of underdevelopment.

The implications of the current socio-economic situation for international peace and security are therefore disturbing. Imbalances in the world economy wreak their own social havoc and ultimately threaten the very stability we seek. Even as old battles are ended, new sources of conflict are emerging, and increasingly we see that these are not ideological or political, but economic in nature. The peace equation cannot be solved unless our economic and social concerns are factored in. There must therefore be joint action by both developed and developing countries to ensure that political progress is matched by economic and social development.

We are especially happy to note in this regard that the Declaration which emerged from the special session of the General Assembly on international economic co-operation, in April this year, takes full cognizance of that requirement and consequently of the urgent need to revitalize the economic development of the developing countries. In a rare display of unity, both developing and developed countries agreed in that document to the pursuit of policies necessary to the recovery and sustained growth of the world economy. Its spirit and letter should now inspire and guide us as we engage in a dialogue aimed at furthering international economic co-operation.

(Mr. Insanally, Guyana)

That joint commitment should also find reflection in the strategy for the fourth development decade, the adoption of which, I understand, is imminent. That document, the product of extensive consultations and negotiations, reflects the immediate direction of international co-operation. Clearly, it cannot be said to go as far as developing countries would wish, but if followed it can lead to an improvement in the conditions for development. In the particular area of trade, we await the final outcome of the Uruguay Round of negotiations which, however, shows no sign so far of any significant concessions. Common necessity, however, must in our view lead both the developing and the developed countries to expand areas of trade co-operation, since this is the recognized key to the future of the global economy.

It is further encouraging to note that the international community, in the face of other major problems such as drug trafficking and the environment, has been fully galvanized into a united effort to deal with the harmful consequences of those problems. Beyond their domestic campaigns, States have worked assiduously at the bilateral, regional and international levels to devise strategies aimed at preserving their societies from further encroachment. The special session on drug trafficking, which was held in New York last year, undoubtedly stimulated increased global attention to the rampant drug trade and suggested additional ways, such as, for example, the creation of an international criminal court, to combat its vicious spread. The outcome of that session represents an admirable example of how nations threatened by a common enemy can come together in defence of their mutual welfare.

Encouraged by that experience, we now look forward to the World Conference on Environment and Development, which is scheduled to be held in Brazil in 1992 and which we trust will produce, as the Vienna Conference did for the drug problem, a

(Mr. Insanally, Guyana)

comprehensive programme to protect and preserve the environment. Such is its own commitment to this goal that my country has sought, in advance of that important forum and in co-operation with the Commonwealth, to build a model utilizing an area of our forests - almost a million acres - to establish the feasibility of sustainable development in a properly managed environment. It is our humble view that such efforts, if emulated and replicated elsewhere, will help considerably to save the global commons.

In the light of the increasing globalization of the issues to which I have adverted, it is clear that a new world order is no longer a vague desideratum; it is now an urgent necessity. The traditional methods of managing human affairs have become patently inadequate to the circumstances of this generation. For while man has had the ingenuity to conquer outer space, he has apparently yet to dominate the Earth and all its problems. It is as if the human mind, having transcended its terrestrial confines, is incapable now of dealing with the mundane issues of life. And yet unless he can overcome the limitations of his otherwise marvellous scientific and technological accomplishments, all his efforts will have been in vain and he himself will have been placed at the risk of extinction.

That frightening realization must surely compel us to accept the urgency of a global perestroika aimed at creating a new and functional international system based on the premises of interdependence and collective responsibility. Such a system, if it is to work, must be entirely democratic in nature and must revolve around the United Nations, the Organization we have together devised to pursue our common objectives. Experience has shown that while it is by no means perfect the United Nations is an instrument whose potential for promoting international co-operation is vast. We must therefore explore its limits to the full. Equally

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important, we must work to ensure that it is endowed with strength and vitality and is fully capable of undertaking the many responsibilities continuously being entrusted to it.

We must also be ever mindful of the fact that a strong United Nations can emerge and thrive only in an international environment where the rule of law prevails. Violations such as that committed in the Gulf strike not only at international peace and security but also at the fundamental bases of our Organization. The principles of the Charter, which proscribe the use of force in international relations, are sacrosanct and should not be violated with impunity. Any transgression must therefore be dealt with condignly whenever and wherever it occurs.

Only a week ago, some 72 Heads of State or Government came together in New York to draw attention to the plight of the world's children. It was the most impressive demonstration of the priority which world leaders are now prepared to give to critical humanitarian concerns. Children, after all, represent the future of humanity, and yet they continue to be the innocent and principal victims of all forms of aggression. As was stated in the 1990 report of the United Nations Children's Fund on the state of the world's children, it is the poorest and most vulnerable children who are paying the third world's debt

> "with the sacrifice of their normal growth, with their health and with the loss of their opportunity to be educated".

It cannot do to expose our future so continuously to such hazards.

If that Summit is to mean something, and if we are to save future generations from the scourge of war and poverty, we must act promptly to install the new order of which we have spoken. It is only by so doing that we can redress the grave imbalances which exist in the current order and which are the root cause of the world's major problems.

(Mr. Insanally, Guyana)

In that respect it is extremely heart-warming to hear both Powers - the United States and the USSR - now acknowledging the need for such an order. Their newly found entente has opened up new vistas for international co-operation in every field and has thus brought hope to a world now in despair. It offers, in short, a singular opportunity for human progress. Let us, therefore, not waste it through indecision and inaction.

Mr. DA LUZ (Cape Verde) (spoke in Portuguese; English text furnished by the delegation): I should like to begin by offering Mr. de Marco my sincere congratulations on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its forty-fifth session. I am convinced that his vast experience, skills and commitment will guide the work of this session to a fruitful conclusion.

I commend his predecessor, Major General Joseph Garba, for his personal efforts and for the results achieved in the course of the forty-fourth session, over which he presided with efficiency and steadfastness. I also wish to express my appreciation to the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, for his dedication to the cause of international peace and security and for the skilful manner in which he has been assisting the diplomatic activities of the United Nations.

As the universality of the Organization is enlarged by the admission of new Members, we take great pride and satisfaction in seeing Namibia occupy its place as a full Member of this assembly of independent nations. We congratulate the people of Namibia for having attained its freedom from the yoke of colonial occupation after many years of struggle and perseverance. We wish the people of Namibia the best in its effort to build a nation with dignity and to create spiritual and material well-being for itself.

We also welcome Liechtenstein's admission into the membership of the United Nations and pledge it the co-operation of my Government and delegation.

Over the past few months, we have witnessed a happy trend towards the reunification of nations. In that regard, I welcome with great satisfaction the reunification of Germany, a nation with which my country, Cape Verde, has always entertained the best relations. At a time when Germany, after four decades, has recovered its full national sovereignty and put an end to one of the most painful

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sequels to the Second World War, I wish the German people happiness, peace and prosperity in its reunited country.

I take this opportunity also to offer the Yemeni people my congratulations on the unification of its country and to wish it a future of peace and happiness. We hope soon to be able to welcome the unification of the Korean nation. In that context, encouragement should be given to the continuation of high-level contacts in the search for a peaceful solution to the Korean conflict.

We live today in a world of great changes and expectations. In Cape Verde, we have been following those changes with a great deal of interest for their repercussions on world peace and their impact upon the political, economic and social well-being of all nations.

The political events that have taken place over the last few years in Eastern Europe have generated a climate conducive to peace and co-operation among European nations and between the Soviet Union and the United States of America, thus putting an end to the cold war that polarized world politics for many decades.

The democratization of the Eastern Europe countries and the reunification of Germany are events of paramount importance in the history of this century and represent the triumph of reason. A democratic and united Europe is a powerful factor for world peace and stability, economic development and the well-being of the peoples of the region. At this juncture, I sincerely wish the best to all the peoples of Europe, and that they unite their faith and garner their strength in redesigning their collective way of co-existing in peace. And I hope that, in a fraternal and democratic way, solutions will be found to the problems that separated them in the past and contributed to the economic failures of many.

I encourage the leaders of that region and their peoples to continue to build the peaceful relations necessary to foment the harmony and economic development of all countries in the region. I am convinced that the new Europe will contribute

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towards the political stability and economic development of other regions, and particularly to the region of Africa to which we belong.

The fundamental changes in the policy of the Soviet Union that have taken place over the past few years set in motion a process that seems to have contributed to the end of the cold war, thus ushering in a new chapter in the relationship between the super-Powers, based this time on co-operation, the upholding of the right of peoples to self-determination, and the creation of a better climate of world peace and security. Those changes augur well for the emergence of a new era in the history of nations, an era dominated not by the fear of a nuclear catastrophe, but characterized by co-operation among all countries, democratization and economic development, and respect for and maintenance of international law.

The democratization of the world seems to be a fundamental political feature of the new era. At the international level, that democratization is based on respect for the sovereignty and integrity of all nations, the non-use of force in international relations, and co-operation among nations in the establishment of conditions of peace, prosperity and the political stability of all countries.

There is also democratization at the national level, for we believe that the economic and social development of countries is a goal that goes hand in hand with the establishment of a system of real democracy that liberates the creativity of peoples, eliminates the political obstacles to private initiative, and creates stable conditions conducive to investment.

In Cape Verde, legal mechanisms have been set up and political reforms introduced to put in place a democratic parliamentary system of Government.

(Mr. Da Luz, Cape Verde)

We are convinced that the reforms that have been introduced into our political life will undoubtedly strengthen our internal stability and reinforce the efforts and the commitments of the Cape Verdean people living at home and abroad to build a modern and developed nation, at peace with itself and with the world.

We also believe that the democratization of nations will strengthen the checks-and-balances mechanisms of different governmental organs.

These checks and balances seem to gain more relevance in a world in which actions are being taken by some statesmen with total disregard for the basic norms of international law. Such actions could endanger world peace and stability and create economic hardship, especially for the economically vulnerable third-world countries.

The climate of peace and dialogue that we have been witnessing lately has suffered a great blow with the current situation in the Gulf. Cape Verde condemns most firmly the invasion of Kuwait and its purported annexation by Iraq. In due time the Security Council, voicing the feelings of frustration and indignation of the international community unequivocally condemned the invasion of Kuwait and took measures aimed at ending such an occupation. Cape Verde supports those measures unconditionally and exhorts the community of nations to take appropriate steps to restore the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Kuwait.

The prompt and unequivocal stand of the Security Council, which I commend, has broadened the prospects of United Nations activities in the maintenance of international peace and security, as a guarantor of the peace of all nations, especially of countries that are small or militarily weak.

(Mr. Da Luz, Cape Verde)

On the other hand, it is high time the Security Council and the United Nations in general sought to resolve, once and for all, the conflict in the Middle East. The Security Council resolutions related to the region in general, and to the Palestinian conflict in particular, should be implemented with the same vigour and forcefulness. Major Charter principles must not be implemented selectively. They should be scrupulously observed and actively supported by all nations. If we want a credible United Nations and a reliable Security Council, then we, as nations, must act with seriousness of purpose, consistent with the Charter.

Regrettably, to the present day fundamental Charter principles have been violated time and again. We have seen the sovereignty of countries repeatedly violated in Angola, Mozambique and elsewhere; we have seen illegal occupation and annexation of territories in the Middle East. We have witnessed the flouting of the right of self-determination and independence in East Timor, the plight of the Timorese people, whose right to choose their destiny has fallen into oblivion and whose lives have been torn apart.

Yet those blatant and consistent patterns of disregard for the Charter's principles have not met with strong and vigorous condemnation and action by the United Nations.

Turning a blind eye to those principles or violating them whenever it suits the whims and interests of narrow foreign policy objectives means sending mixed signals as to the determination of the United Nations and the Security Council to defend them and impose complete compliance with them.*

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* The President returned to the Chair.

(Mr. Da Luz, Cape Verde)

I hope that the actions taken by the Security Council against the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait represent a turning-point in the role of the Council and the United Nations and that they will live up to their responsibilities by consistently defending those principles and guaranteeing international peace and security.

Cape Verde is very sensitive to the problems of the environment. In this regard, it is very encouraging to note the enormous interest that countries all over the world have been showing in the protection and preservation of the environment.

At a time when there is concrete evidence of the continuous deterioration of environmental conditions on the planet, affecting the whole of mankind, the community of nations should seize the opportunity offered by the 1992 Conference on Environment and Development to take effective action to improve the quality of the air that we all breathe and protect the ozone layer and the world's climate.

The struggle against drought and desertification, which is spreading every year, is a pressing need that deserves the attention and serious effort not only of those immediately affected, but of all nations.

The time has come to undertake, at a world-wide level, new initiatives to counter-attack effectively the devastating ecological effects of drought and desertification.

Solving the global problems that we all face today - the democratization of political institutions; the ensuring of world peace and security; world-wide human rights protection and protection of the children, in respect of whom the successful first World Summit recently took place in New York - requires and presupposes a substantial improvement in the living conditions of peoples in the developing countries.

(Mr. Da Luz, Cape Verde)

The shaping of a new era in international relations that we all seem to visualize, and that we all want, must be based on, or accompanied by the economic development of all countries.

Unless the world's economic and social problems are addressed, the impact of the relaxation of international tensions and conflicts will be minimal; human rights abuses will continue to be perpetrated; the democratization of the world will for many be an unattainable goal; and the protection of the world's environment will be seriously threatened.

It is in the process of economic and social development, or as a consequence of it, that peoples learn to appreciate, cherish and respect the democratic values of society; it is in this process that peoples learn that arbitrary imprisonment, indiscriminate killings by death squads and other outrageous human rights violations belong to a world of tyranny and political backwardness that should no longer be tolerated; it is in this process that peoples learn how to love nature and preserve the environment.

The globalization of issues and the need for harmonious and peaceful coexistence among countries require, today more than ever, a serious, consistent and general response to the challenges posed by underdevelopment.

(Mr. Da Luz, Cape Verde)

At a time when we are witnessing with great satisfaction the unfolding of positive political events in the international arena and are preparing to forge a new era in international relations, it becomes imperative that a new agenda be drawn up to consider, and find collective answers to, global issues. Africa, step by step, is creating the conditions for, and is positioning itself as an active partner in, the emergence and definition of this new era.

The independence of Namibia and the prospects for a negotiated settlement of the conflict against apartheid in South Africa are important factors in the process of the restoration of Africa's freedom from colonialism and racism. In this context I encourage the ongoing contacts and efforts in South Africa with a view to eliminating apartheid and creating a non-racial, democratic and harmonious society.

We are very concerned over the economic and social situation in Africa, a region with the highest number of least developed countries. This concern of ours is heightened by the poor results achieved at the second Conference of the Least Developed Countries.

We believe that the ongoing political reforms in Africa will greatly improve internal conditions for economic development in the continent. These courageous efforts by African countries should be supported with massive economic and financial assistance on the part of the developed countries that will help them consolidate their newly created democratic institutions.

We hope that the enthusiasm born of the political events in Europe and the subsequent emergence of new geographical areas of economic interest will not divert the attention of our partners of the developed world.

As the twentieth century draws to an end, it is our sincere hope that the next century will be a century of global democratization and economic development, harmony and well-being of all peoples of the world. It is therefore incumbent upon us all to have a vision of the future and to take the necessary steps towards that

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end, thus creating a new society, a society of peoples of different cultures, but united by the same nature and destiny in a world without frontiers.

Mr. RANA (Nepal): Allow me at the outset to convey to you, Sir, my delegation's sincere felicitations on your unanimous election as President of the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly. Our satisfaction at your election is even greater as Nepal shares with the friendly Government and people of Malta a deep and abiding commitment to the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and to the policy of non-alignment. Your wide experience as a political leader and your knowledge of multilateral diplomacy will no doubt provide you with the particular sensitivity and skill to guide us through the complex issues on the agenda of the General Assembly. My delegation pledges its full co-operation to you.

Nepal welcomes the admission of the Principality of Liechtenstein as a Member of the Organization, an event that has moved us even closer to the goal of universal membership of the United Nations. We look forward to working in close co-operation with the delegation of this friendly country, which represents one of the most successful combinations of democracy, human rights and economic prosperity.

I should like to avail myself of this opportunity to express my delegation's appreciation to Mr. Joseph N. Garba of Nigeria for the admirable manner in which he guided the work of the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly.

The past 12 months have been a busy period for the United Nations. There is today a renewal of faith in the Organization as an irreplaceable instrument in promoting international peace and co-operation. Much of this welcome resurgence is the result of the diplomatic skill and efforts of the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar. He deserves our gratitude and full support.

The year has been marked by events extraordinary in sweep and importance. Almost a half century ago the peoples of the United Nations through its Charter reaffirmed faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human

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person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small. For the majority of the peoples around the world, this vision was little more than a dream. Symptoms of positive changes in international relations, accompanied by a new and legitimate assertion of peoples' rights, became evident beginning with the middle of the decade of the 1980s. That the momentum towards the vision of freedom and dignity outlined in the Charter would gather the strength of a massive tidal wave was beyond anyone's imagination only 12 months ago. This spontaneous wave has awakened people to assert their fundamental rights and freedom not only in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe but also in many parts of Asia and Africa, including my own county, Nepal. The movement for the restoration of multiparty democracy in Nepal, which started only days after the first breach in the Berlin Wall, has ushered in a new political era in our country. The interim Government, representing major political parties, is now engaged in the task of consolidating democracy. The Prime Minister himself would have liked to come and acquaint the Assembly with the recent political changes in the country. However, that was not possible at this stage owing to the consultations he is undertaking on the draft of a new Constitution that is soon to be promulgated. The new Constitution, reflecting the democratic aspirations of the Nepalese people, will institutionalize a constitutional monarchy and a multiparty system and adhere to the values of people's sovereignty and accountable government. The Constitution will also guarantee the inviolability of fundamental rights and freedom, in keeping with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, other covenants and the principle of the supremacy of law. General elections held on the basis of universal adult suffrage scheduled for the first of 1991 will strengthen political stability and freedom. The people of Nepal are proud to be part of the global movement towards democracy and freedom; the people of Nepal are grateful for the understanding and support they have received from people around the world.

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Having set ourselves the irreversible goal of democracy and pluralism, we now look forward to meaningful co-operation and assistance from friendly countries and multilateral institutions in the daunting task of economic and social development.

Nepal most heartily welcomes the creation of a more relaxed international climate, characterized by the big-Power détente. The most concrete symbol of revolutionary change in the political atmosphere is the reunification of Germany. I take this opportunity to extend the most cordial welcome to the delegation of the united Germany to this family of nations.

The euphoria over the end of the cold war and the hopes for a more stable and democratic world order have, however, been dampened by the present situation in the Persian Gulf region. The aggression against Kuwait, a sovereign and independent State and a Member of this Organization, is a rude reminder that the agreement of the two major Powers to settle their conflicts is a necessary but insufficient condition for the maintenance of international peace, security and stability. The aggression is an open violation of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. It has also caused immense sufferings and dislocations to nationals of third countries, including Nepal, residing and working there. The aggression has evoked a swift and unprecedented response from the Security Council. The series of resolutions the Council has adopted demanding unconditional compliance with the rule of law in inter-State relations has ushered in a new phase in the application of the authority of the Security Council in the maintenance of international peace and security.

The five permanent members of the Security Council bear a special responsibility under the Charter for the maintenance of international peace. It is true that there are and will be many more influential actors in world affairs. This will require consultations, co-ordination and compromise. The renewed interest in the international Organization and the willingness of the major Powers

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to use the mechanism of the Charter have the potential of restoring to the collective security system its original design. Nepal, therefore, welcomes the emergence of the unique convergence of views among the permanent members of the Security Council over the grave situation in the Persian Gulf region. We earnestly hope that this unity of the United Nations will be the rule rather than an exception. My delegation also agrees with the view expressed by the Secretary-General that agreement among the major Powers must carry with it the support of the international community to counter any legitimate anxiety that world affairs may be run by a directorate.

As the international community prepares for a new millennium, we are witnessing a rapid crumbling of many comfortable assumptions of yesteryear. At the same time, it is heartening to note that schisms which characterized the post - Second-World-War era are also being rapidly bridged. These positive changes have enhanced the capacity of the United Nations to work for a peaceful settlement of various outstanding bilateral and regional conflicts.

The peaceful transition of Namibia to independence is an outstanding example of what this Organization could achieve, given the support and co-operation of its Members. The potentials of peace-keeping and peace-making operations of the United Nations have also been evident elsewhere, especially in Central America. We welcome the recent agreement between Iran and Iraq to settle their disputes in keeping with Security Council resolution 598 (1987). While the situation in Lebanon continues to be alarming, admirable services are being rendered by the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, to which Nepal is a contributor. Implementation of the Taif formula, fully supported by the United Nations, has held out promise of an end to the tragic fratricide in that country. The situation in the Middle East continues to be explosive with the stalling of all efforts to

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promote a dialogue between the Israelis and the Palestinians. My delegation feels that the opportunity created by a new climate of international relations must be seized for a collective and concerted effort for the resolution of the conflict on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). As in the case of the Middle East, the spirit of conciliation among the major Powers offers hope for a settlement of the situation in Afghanistan. This spirit of conciliation has already raised the expectation that a solution of the problem of Cambodia with the active involvement of the United Nations may be within sight. Elsewhere in Asia, we welcome the unification of Yemen. My delegation is looking forward to the day, and we hope it is sooner rather than later, when the Korean people will be reunited through their own peaceful efforts. We have long respected their aspirations for reunification and welcome the continuing high-level negotiations between the two sides. Each side has been exercising all the attributes of sovereignty, and they will doubtless settle between them in the course of negotiations the question of membership of the United Nations. My delegation understands and will fully respect the wish of each side in the matter. In South Africa, the universally condemned system of apartheid is still in place. While we are encouraged by some recent developments, we believe that concerted efforts and pressure will have to be maintained to make the process irreversible and comprehensive with the establishment of a multiracial democratic society in South Africa. We share the disappointment of the Secretary-General at the lack of progress towards an overall solution in Cyprus and continue to support the use of his good offices for the restoration of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-aligned character of Cyprus.

The growing consensus on the need to wage a concerted war against drugs and terrorism is indicative of the new climate in international relations, in which

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nations are willing to work together for the general well-being of the people. The programme of action adopted at the seventeenth special session provides a useful framework for combating the scourge of drug abuse and trafficking, which threaten to tear the very fabric of civilized society apart.

Looking to the future, there are some imperatives which need to be taken into consideration by the Governments if we are to ensure peace and justice, human freedom and dignity. The United Nations provides an indispensable instrument for the co-ordination and harmonization of actions in these areas.

The first of these imperatives is that of arresting and reversing the arms race. Recognition by two of the world's most powerful States of the fact that the arms race has reached an absurd limit beyond all legitimate needs of national security has opened a new era of hope for disarmament.

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The perceptible improvement in international relations must be utilized to press for the extension of disarmament efforts beyond the nuclear and conventional arsenals of the great Powers and their alliances. Disarmament, to be meaningful, has to be the joint endeavour of all nations.

The second immediate challenge before the world community is that of the increasing economic difficulties, especially in the developing countries. It has become imperative to act urgently in three spheres: debt, trade and commodities, and human resources development. At the special session on international economic co-operation the General Assembly made a serious evaluation of the current problems and the steps needed to address them. The strategy for the fourth United Nations development decade, expected to be adopted at the current session of the General Assembly, should be a coherent and realistic programme reflecting the development imperatives in the decade of the 1990s.

The vagaries of the international economic situation have hit the least-developed countries the hardest. Those countries face the most acute problems and are being increasingly marginalized in the world economy. The adoption at the Paris Conference of a programme of action designed to speed the growth and development of the least-developed countries is a milestone and we expect full and expeditious implementation of the plan. In this connection, we welcome the announcement by Kuwait that it would write off all interest on its loans to the least developed countries and consider with them arrangements with regard to the principal, with a view to easing the debt burden of the least developed countries.

The third imperative is the need to halt and reverse the alarming degradation and destruction of our environment. The challenge is to preserve and protect our environment for generations to come without sacrificing the development imperatives

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of the developing countries. The global debate and activities on this question augur well for the adoption of environmentally sound development strategies at the 1992 Conference on Environment and Development.

The fourth challenge is to adjust to international law and to honour the obligations that flow from the Charter. Only a legal order that encompasses the entire community of nations can provide the framework for effective multilateral co-operation. It is in the interest of all nations, large and small, to work for and within a coherent and viable system of law, impartially administered and imposed. In the final analysis, the rule of law alone will guarantee peace and stability for all.

The fifth imperative is to secure universal respect for human rights. The principal purpose of the United Nations - the maintenance of international peace and security and the promotion of economic social progress and better standards of life for all - is to give content and meaning to human dignity. As long as a government violates the universally accepted norms of human rights, as long as people are brutalized and oppressed on the basis of sex or race or because of their opinions or beliefs, the international community cannot claim to have conquered the brutalities that have darkened human history. The United Nations presents the only forum for a co-ordinated effort to ensure that human rights and fundamental freedoms are fully observed.

The unprecedented attendance at the recent World Summit for Children highlighted the need to take special actions in favour of children, who constitute the most vulnerable sector of our society. The Declaration adopted by the Summit should prove to be a powerful incentive to put the children first - to give every child a better future. The Summit has also provided a strong incentive for the speedy accession to, and ratification of, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, making it a truly universal instrument.

(Mr. Rana, Nepal)

The beginning of the decade of the 1990s has ushered in hopeful signs of growing mutual confidence and good faith. This is essential for the movement from an age of fear, doubt, anxiety and deprivation for an overwhelming majority to a new era of interdependence and co-operation, to a more generous period of statesmanship, an era of freedom and dignity for all. Today, there is also an increasing willingness on the part of Member States to use the existing international mechanism to its full potential. This is essential to ensure the safe and dignified passage of humanity to the next millennium.

The meeting rose at 12.10 p.m.